

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 0737

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TAGS: PFOR, PINT, UR, US

SUBJECT: KOSYGIN AND PODGORNYY ON U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS

1. AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR PLIMSOLL HAS INFORMED US THAT AN USUSUAL AMOUNT OF THE CONVERSATIONS WHICH WHITLAM HAD WITH SOVIET LEADERS WAS DEVOTED TO U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS, AND SPECIFICALLY TO THE NEED FOR A CONTINUATION OF CLOSE COOPERATION BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND MOSCOW DESPITE THE DIFFICULTIES OVER THE TRADE BILL. IN THIS REGARD PODGORNYY, FOR EXAMPLE, STRESSED THAT NO CHANGE HAS TAKEN PLACE IN THE SOVIET POLICY OF SEEKING BETTER RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. THE SOVIETS, HE SAID, WANT TO CONTINUE DETENTE. THEY ARE COMMITTED TO THIS COURSE "AND NO ONE IS TRYING TO CHANGE IT," SAID PODGORNYY. THIS POINT WAS ALSO EMPHASIZED BY KOSYGIN WHO SAID THAT THERE WAS "COMPLETE POLITICAL UNIT IN OUR COUNTRY."

2. REGARDING TRADE, KOSYGIN, WHO HAD THE BULK OF THE CONVERSATIONS WITH WHITLAM, NOTED THAT THE USSR HAS A NUMBER OF JOINT PROJECTS WITH UNITED STATES FIRMS. THE KAMA RIVER TRUCK PLANT, HE SAID, IS BEING BUILT WITH U.S. COOPERATION. WE WANT MORE ECONOMIC COOPERATION WITH THE U.S. AND WE ARE, THEREFORE, NOT INTERESTED IN SEEING ECONOMIC CHAOS IN THE UNITED STATES, HE SAID. KOSYGIN THEN ADDED THAT MOSCOW IS CONVINCED THAT "THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE TO ECONOMIC

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COOPERATION BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE USSR."

3. KOSYGIN SAID THAT, OF COURSE, THE U.S. AND THE USSR ARE THE MOST POWERFUL COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD, BUT NEITHER OF THE SUPERPOWERS WANT TO FORCE THEIR WILL ON OTHERS. WE DON'T WANT TO DICTATE TO THIRD COUNTRIES, HE SAID. WE WANT TO BUILD OUR RELATIONS ON A BASIS OF MUTUAL CONFIDENCE AND WE HAVE ESTABLISHED A GOOD FOUNDATION FOR THIS THROUGH THE SUMMIT MEETINGS WHICH HAVE TAKEN PLACE. (PLIMSOLL COMMENTED THAT HE WAS STRUCK DURING THE TALKS AT THIS POINT BY THE WAY KOSYGIN WAS USING THE PRONOUN "WE". IT WAS ALMOST, SAID PLIMSOLL, AS THOUGH HE WERE AUTHORIZED BY THE UNITED STATES TO EXPRESS HIMSELF IN THIS MANNER.)

4. THE SOVIETS HAVE DONE NOTHING TO INTERFERE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THE UNITED STATES, KOSYGIN CONTINUED. WE NEVER ATTACKED OR CRITICIZED NIXON DURING ANY OF HIS DIFFICULTIES. WE HAD GOOD RELATIONS WITH HIM AND HAVE CONTINUED THESE WITH PRESIDENT FORD.

5. ON THE TRADE BILL ITSELF, KOSYGIN NOTED THAT THE KREMLIN HAD NEGOTIATIONS ON THIS QUESTION OVER A PERIOD OF TIME WITH BOTH PRESIDENTS NIXON AND FORD. THE U.S. ULTIMATELY CAME UP WITH AN AGREEMENT THE TERMS OF WHICH WERE QUITE UNWELCOME TO US, KOSYGIN SAID. IT IS UNSATISFACTORY FOR A COUNTRY LIKE THE UNITED STATES, HE CONTINUED, TO TAKE A POSITION WHICH WOULD LIMIT TRADE WITH THE USSR TO A PERIOD OF 18 MONTHS AND RELATE THIS TO THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE ALLOWED TO EMIGRATE FROM THE USSR. THE LATTER QUESTION IS ONE

FOR THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT TO DECIDE.

6. THE WHOLE PROBLEM OF JEWISH EMIGRATION, KOSYGIN STATED, IS IN ANY CASE A MYTH. THERE ARE NO RESTRICTIONS ON PEOPLE WHO WANT TO LEAVE APART FROM THOSE WHO OCCUPY POSITIONS WHICH ALLOWS THEM ACCESS TO SECURITY INFORMATION. IF THE JACKSON THESIS WERE FOLLOWED, THEN WE COULD RAISE THE NEGRO PROBLEM IN THE U.S., BUT WE CONSIDER THIS A DOMESTIC AFFAIR WHICH THE UNITED STATES

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MUST SETTLE ITSELF. (PLIMSOLL COMMENTED THAT THIS WAS STATED WITH NO GREAT HEAT BY KOSYGIN.)

7. IN FURTHER DISCUSSION OF EMIGRATION ON THE SECOND DAY OF THE VISIT, KOSYGIN TOLD WHITLAM THAT PEOPLE

CAN LEAVE THE USSR ANY TIME THEY WANT. THERE ARE NOW 1,000 SOVIET CITIZENS WHO HAVE APPLIED TO GO TO AUSTRALIA, 500 HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED PERMISSION. (NO TIME FRAME WAS GIVEN FOR THESE FIGURES.) THOSE WITH SPECIAL ACCESS TO SECURITY INFORMATION CANNOT LEAVE IMMEDIATELY, BUT IN FIVE YEARS, HE ADDED, THEIR INFORMATION WOULD NO LONGER BE RELEVANT. SOME OF THOSE OVERSEAS WHO WANT THEIR RELATIVES TO JOIN THEM ARE WAR CRIMINALS WHO WOULD THEMSELVES BE PROSECUTED IF THEY CAME BACK TO THE USSR, HE SAID, IMPLYING THAT RELATIVES OF SUCH PERSONS WOULD NOT RECEIVE EXIT PERMITS. WE STUDY ALL CASES ON THEIR MERITS, KOSYGIN SAID. IN THE LAST TWO YEARS WE HAVE ALLOWED 50,000 JEWS TO LEAVE. THE NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS HAS FALLEN RECENTLY. NOW THERE ARE ONLY 3,000 APPLICATIONS FOR JEWS TO LEAVE AND A NUMBER OF THOSE WHO HAVE ALREADY LEFT WISH TO COME BACK.

8. COMMENT: BOTH PODGORNYY AND KOSYGIN WERE CLEARLY GIVING WHITLAM A POSITIVE MESSAGE WHICH WAS MEANT FOR WASHINGTON AS WELL AS CANBERRA. THIS WAS BORNE OUT BY KOSYGIN'S JANUARY 15 SPEECH IN WHICH HE STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF DETENTE. WE WILL BE REPORTING SEPARATELY OTHER SUBJECTS WHICH CAME UP DURING WHITLAM'S TALKS IN MOSCOW. STOESEL

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